



What to Expect at your First Visit to Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS)

1. During your first visit to CAPS, your provider will gather some basic information about you, ask about your personal history and explore your current symptoms and concerns.
 - Sometimes, you will have intake paperwork and screening forms to fill out. You will be informed about any necessary paperwork when you schedule your initial appointment.
 - Your responses on the screening forms are helpful for the provider to understand your concerns. It is important you show up early for the appointment to ensure you have adequate time to complete the forms.
2. When you arrive for your appointment*, you will check in with office support staff. Your provider will meet you in the reception area and accompany you to their private office.
 - Your appointment will generally last between 20 and 50 minutes depending on what kind of appointment you are scheduled for.
 - At the end of your appointment, your provider will offer some recommendations to address your specific concerns. Together, you and your provider will develop a plan and next steps, which may include scheduling another appointment and/or assisting with other referrals.
 - Providers love questions! Please be open with any questions you have about the visit or the counseling process.

*appointments are also available via Zoom.
3. Counseling services are confidential.
 - No one can access your records or your private therapy information without your written consent.
 - If you want your provider to share information about you with someone on campus or off campus, you will sign a release of information form to give permission for this correspondence.
 - There are some exceptions to confidentiality when it comes to safety. Your provider will explain the limitations of confidentiality during your appointment.
4. It is common to have a variety of thoughts and feelings about your first appointment.
 - Your feelings may include nervousness, second-guessing yourself, consideration to cancel your appointment, excitement, or relief or all of the above!
 - Remember your provider is nonjudgmental, a trained professional, and prepared to listen and support you.
 - Counselors are trained to understand your difficulties in relation to your history, life experiences and biology. In fact, most struggles make sense and are adaptive from a psychological perspective.
 - Getting help is not a sign of weakness and those who seek help are more likely to find mental health improvement.
5. Counseling is designed to be objective and is different than talking to your best friend or a family member.
6. Change can take time. It will require patience as well as taking risks and pushing outside of your comfort zone.

To learn more, visit CAPS website: www.stcloudstate.edu/counseling or feel free to give us a call at 320.308.3171.